

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUDAPEST 3317

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (ROMANY, PAL), HU, EAGR

SUBJ: VISIT OF HUNGARIAN MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE TO U.S.

REF: (A) STATE 235302, (B) BUDAPEST 3287

1. MOST OF INFORMATION REQUESTED IN REFTEL A WAS PROVIDED BY EMBASSY IN BUDAPEST 3287. FOLLOWING IS EMBASSY RESPONSE TO THOSE DEPARTMENT QUERIES IN REF A NOT COVERED IN REF B.

2. ASIDE FROM INFORMATION SUPPLIED IN REFTEL B BY MEMBER OF HSWP CC, WE HAVE NO FIRM EVIDENCE TO INDICATE THAT ROMANY'S CURRENT STANDING IN PARTY AND GOVERNMENT IS ANYTHING OTHER THAN WHAT IT SHOULD BE. HE HAS BEEN EITHER A MEMBER OF OR CHIEF OF FOUR ECONOMIC POLICY BODIES OF HSWP CC. HE CAME TO HIS PRESENT CABINET POSITION AFTER HAVING SERVED FOR TWO YEARS AS CHAIRMAN OF AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT. HE IS AT MOMENT CHAIRMAN OF COOPERATIVE POLICY WORKING COLLECTIVE, WHICH DEALS WITH POLICY TOWARDS FARM COLLECTIVES, AND IS ALSO A MEMBER OF NATIONAL ECONOMIC COMMITTEE. LATTER IS ONE OF THREE POWERFUL POLICY-MAKING BODIES OF CC AND IS UNDER STRONG INFLUENCE OF POLITBURO AND SECRETARIAT WHICH CONTROL THIS COMMITTEE TO AID IN FORMATION OF ECONOMIC POLICY.

3. AMOUNT OF INFLUENCE WHICH ROMANY EXERTS ON AGRICULTURAL POLICY IS NOT TOTALLY CLEAR. MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, LIKE ALL GOH AGENCIES, CARRIES OUT ITS ACTIVITIES ON
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BASIS OF INSTRUCTIONS EMANATING FROM CC. THUS, ROMANY

IS EXECUTOR OF HUNGARY'S AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND YET HE SITS AS A MEMBER OF NATIONAL ECONOMIC COMMITTEE WHICH IS A POLICY-FORMING ORGAN. IF WE HAD TO MAKE A GUESS, WE WOULD SAY THAT ROMANY'S INFLUENCE ON AGRICULTURAL POLICY IS CONSIDERABLE. AS FAR AS FREEDOM OF ACTION GOES IN NEGOTIATING, WE ASSUME THAT HE HAS A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF LEEWAY IN MAKING HIS DECISIONS BUT HAS TO USE JUDGMENT IN HOW FAR HE THINKS HE CAN GO.

4. ROMANY HAS BEEN A PRACTICING COMMUNIST FOR MOST OF HIS ADULT LIFE. DESPITE THIS WE HAVE NO INKLING OF WHAT HIS ATTITUDE IS TOWARDS SOVIET UNION AND COMMUNISM AS PRACTICED THERE. IN HIS DEALINGS WITH EMBASSY WE HAVE SEEN NO EVIDENCE OF ANY ANTI-AMERICAN ATTITUDES; IN FACT, QUITE THE CONTRARY. ROMANY HAS ALWAYS BEEN PLEASANT, FORTHRIGHT AND ACCOMMODATING IN HIS APPROACH TO AMERICANS. HE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE IDEOLOGICALLY CONTENTIOUS.

5. RE COMMENT MADE ON ROMANY BY FOREIGN MINISTER PUJA, WE CAN ATTEST TO MINISTER'S INTELLIGENCE BUT WE ARE UNABLE TO MAKE JUDGMENT ON HIS PRACTICALITY. RE HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HSWP LEADERSHIP, WE NOTE THAT SUGGESTION FOR MAKING VISIT TO U.S. AT THIS TIME CAME FROM HUNGARIAN SIDE. FROM THIS WE CAN CONCLUDE ONLY THAT HE STANDS IN GOOD STEAD WITH PARTY LEADERSHIP. WE ASSUME THAT HIS PERFORMANCE AS MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE UP TO NOW HAS BEEN AT LEAST SATISFACTORY.

6. WE ARE UNAWARE OF ANY PARTICULAR PRESSURES OR CONSTRAINTS THAT MIGHT BE PLACED UPON ROMANY DURING HIS FORTHCOMING VISIT. WHILE EFFECTS OF DROUGHT TO SOME EXTENT MAY BE REFLECTED IN DISCUSSIONS AT SOME POINT DURING HIS VISIT TO U.S., WE ARE NOT INCLINED TO VIEW THAT DROUGHT HAS PUT HIM IN A DISADVANTAGEOUS BARGAINING POSITION.

7. COMMENT ON ROMANY'S PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER ARE CONTAINED IN REFTEL B. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION TO SUPPLY ON HIS NEGOTIATING SKILLS AND LITTLE ON HIS PERSONAL
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INTERESTS. LIKE ALL HUNGARIANS HE LIKE TO EAT AND DRINK BUT WHAT HIS PREFERENCES ARE WE DO NOT KNOW. AS FAR AS WE ARE AWARE ROMANY DOES NOT SPEAK ENGLISH. HE HAS, HOWEVER, A MODEST CONTROL OF GERMAN. AS REPORTED IN BUDAPEST 3111, MRS. ROMANY WILL NOT BE ACCOMPANYING HER HUSBAND.
MUDD

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